



Partners *In Progress*

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From the Director

by Jim Woolford, Director of FFRRO

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Partners In Progress*. This update relates key happenings in the Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Office (FFRRO) and shares with you the efforts and accomplishments of FFRRO partnerships.

The federal government faces a tremendous task in cleaning up the environment. A 1995 report on contamination identified more than 60,000 potential sites, with a projected price tag of \$250 billion. When people consider FFRRO and its participation in environmental cleanup projects, they tend to associate us solely with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program. While this initiative, started by President Clinton and undertaken with the support of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), is significant, it is only one of our many programs.

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FromTheDirector



Early Transfer Guidance Speeds Redevelopment

Breaking News

by Renee Wynn, Associate
Director of FFRRO



New EPA guidance is paving the way for faster reuse and development of closed federal properties.

Before this new guidance, which implements a recent statutory change in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), contaminated property had to undergo a complete cleanup before it could be transferred. Consequently, transfers often took years to execute, delaying restoration and reuse plans. Now, communities are reaping the benefits of new businesses, jobs, and recreational facilities, as well as stronger economies, as a result of faster transfer.

The Early Transfer Guidance applies to those sites on which hazardous waste was released or disposed of or where hazardous waste was stored for more than one year. It enables federal agencies to transfer contaminated properties to new owners after they have made certain assurances to EPA regarding treatment, use, and access to the site. With such assurances, EPA can fulfill its responsibility to protect human health and the surrounding environment.

Early Transfer Requirements

Before a federal agency can transfer property to a new owner through this quicker process, it must submit to EPA a covenant deferral request. The request must include a detailed description of the contamination on the property and how it

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Acronyms Explained

AFBCA	Air Force Base Conversion Agency
BCT	BRAC Cleanup Team
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FFERDC	Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee
FFRRO	Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Office
NPL	National Priorities List
RAB	Restoration Advisory Board
SSAB	Site-Specific Advisory Board
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

We at FFRRO are excited about *Partners In Progress* and its potential to help stakeholders share vital information. We encourage you to write articles and announcements for upcoming issues. Whether you are a participant on a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), a member of a BRAC Cleanup Team (BCT), a concerned citizen, or a DOE project manager, we want to hear from you!

This informational publication is designed to give you a voice on issues pertaining to the cleanup and reuse of federal facilities. Please share with our readers—your colleagues and constituents—your successes, challenges, and fresh perspectives.

Partners In Progress will be released on a quarterly basis to about 2,000 readers across the country. Our mailing list currently includes EPA, DoD, and DOE personnel; members of RABs and SSABs; concerned citizens; and tribal parties. We hope to reach an even greater audience by posting *Partners In Progress* on FFRRO's Internet home page.

If there is a topic that you would like us to report on, please let us know. We also welcome your input and ideas for improvement.

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From the Director <Continued From Page 1>

In addition to BRAC, we promote stakeholder involvement at federal facility sites through several initiatives. Marsha Minter's column, "The Community Connection," describes some of our new activities. We also are working closely with our regional offices, other federal agencies, states, tribes, and private entities that impact federal facilities.

Cleanup activity at U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) sites commands much of our attention. Few people realize DOE's annual budget for environmental management is almost equivalent to EPA's entire budget. Several EPA offices, in addition to FFRRO, work on DOE cleanup activities in order to provide a regulatory context.

FFRRO is extensively involved in Superfund reauthorization and environmental legislation proposed by other federal departments and agencies. We oversee important developments at individual federal facility sites, such as the deployment of innovative technologies and the filing of lawsuits by states or other parties. We also work with and seek input from site-specific advisory boards (SSABs), which help determine the cleanup remedies chosen at a particular site.

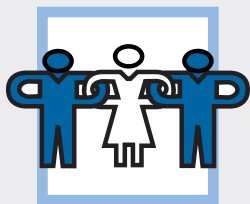
We are becoming more involved at federal facilities not included on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), too. More than 9,000 DoD sites, for example, are not on the NPL, but may require cleanup. Our office and our regions work very closely with states and the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials at such sites.

Many of the contamination challenges we address occurred as a result of the Cold War. Although the Cold War is over, its environmental legacy will take decades, if not centuries, to overcome. It extends beyond the environment, impacting the health and well being of a number of host communities, Native Americans, and environmental justice communities. It is FFRRO's mission to help the federal government meet its responsibilities to these people.

Partners In Progress will convey relevant information, present thought-provoking commentary, and highlight federal facility issues. While there can be a tendency in informational updates to focus on the programs that produce them, we intend also to showcase the achievements of our regional counterparts, like Chris Cora in Region 10, who is working on a base closure in Alaska (page 4). Their excellent work is responsible for much of the program's success. We also will include articles and commentary from other EPA offices, federal agencies, tribes, local governments, states, and public stakeholders. Although the various contributors might not always agree on issues, we all share the common goal of cleaning up contamination to make federal facilities safe for present and future generations. In the spirit of partnership, we hope to make *Partners In Progress* a true community effort.

Blueprint for Action: A Foundation for Community Involvement

The Community Connection



by Marsha Minter, FFRRO Community Involvement National Program Manager

Welcome to The Community Connection! This column will share successes, challenges, tips, and news flashes on community involvement

activities at federal facilities. This issue describes FFRRO's *Stakeholder Involvement Blueprint for Action*, the foundation of FFRRO's activities to reach out to you—our stakeholders.

FFRRO's *Blueprint for Action*, a comprehensive strategy for increasing stakeholder involvement in our shared activities, has four key objectives:

- Foster the federal facilities environmental restoration dialogue
- Promote partnerships
- Endorse environmental justice
- Strengthen stakeholder networks

We are working to meet these objectives through a variety of avenues including regional coordination, training seminars, partnerships, research projects, and technical and financial assistance. Described here are a few ways FFRRO works to implement the *Blueprint for Action*.

The Community Connection Reflection:

“For it has been truly said that we have not inherited the Earth from our parents but have borrowed it from our children.”

—Billy Arjan Singh

First, EPA established a forum, the Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee (FFERDC), to create consensus goals for future cleanup. The committee was composed of a diverse cross section of stakeholders. Through dedication and tireless effort, they produced a set of principles and recommendations used to tackle the enormous challenges of contamination at federal facilities. The principles underscore the importance of partnerships with federal agencies, local governments, communities, and other stakeholders when

addressing critical concerns such as community involvement, funding, priority-setting, and capacity-building.

At the local level, we work with DoD and DOE to establish RABs and SSABs, advisory boards that help agencies involved with cleanup make critical decisions about the process. Input from these groups has been instrumental in making response decisions and, in some cases, reducing costs and accelerating cleanups. We coordinate with DoD and DOE to ensure membership balance and diversity on these boards.

We also are working to ensure that cleanup decisions and priorities reflect a broad spectrum of stakeholder input. To strengthen stakeholder involvement in affected communities, agencies conducting and overseeing cleanup and related public health activities must focus more on environmental justice. Historically, indigenous peoples, low-income communities, and minorities have not been adequately involved in decision-making and priority-setting at federal facilities.

To help ensure meaningful participation by various stakeholders, we have awarded grants to representatives from state and local governments, indigenous organizations, environmental justice groups, and academic institutions. The grants expand awareness of environmental restoration activities at the local level and provide an opportunity for community participation. FFRRO grants support training for impacted communities, participation of citizens on advisory boards, access to vital information, and implementation of the FFERDC principles.

Although the *Blueprint for Action* provides a foundation, stakeholder involvement is always evolving. If you have questions or comments on this or other community issues, please call me at 202 260-6626 or e-mail me at <minter.marsha@epa.gov>.

Cora Finds Challenge in Adak

FromTheField



To learn about the daily challenges faced by an EPA Remedial Project Manager, *Partners In Progress* interviewed Chris Cora, of EPA Region 10 (encompassing Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington).

Q: What does your position entail?

A: To give you a brief synopsis, I implement CERCLA, also known as Superfund, for EPA. I help facilitate cleanup at federal sites as well as private sites on the NPL.

This position provides a platform for a diverse range of responsibilities and goals. I have the opportunity to work with all environmental media. I also get a chance to interact with people representing different organizations and interests, including federal agencies, nonprofit groups, private industry, and communities. The job requires interpersonal skills and tact. There is no textbook outcome in these projects; it's all site-specific.

Q: What project are you working on now?

A: I'm working on the base closure of Adak Naval Air Facility. Adak is an island in the Aleutian chain, roughly 1,300 miles southwest of Anchorage, Alaska. The island has served as a strategic military base since WWII for both the Army and the Navy. It's also one of few sites in the United States that has actually seen combat during this century—U.S. military personnel drove Japanese troops from the Aleutian Islands during WWII. Now, the island is also a maritime refuge for fish and wildlife.

Q: How is this project different from others you have worked on?

A: Adak is a unique site. It is extremely isolated, given the distance from the mainland. There is no civilian community or municipal government on Adak. What's more, the site contains unexploded ordinance (UXO). A native organization, the Aleut Corporation, would like to take over the site and establish a fishing village and related industries. If that happens, this would be the first UXO site lacking a municipal government that would be transferred to a corporation. Moreover, the transfer would give private citizens access to property contaminated with UXO.

Q: What threat does UXO pose on Adak?

A: UXO poses an acute risk. If you come in contact with a grenade, for instance, you could be killed or seriously injured. The Navy imposed strict regulations on military personnel, thus preventing any accidents with UXO. Those same controls would be difficult to impose on a civilian community, particularly where there is no municipal government.

Q: How is UXO influencing the reuse plans of this base?

A: That's the dilemma we're facing now. The RAB, made up of representatives of all Adak stakeholders, needs to determine the best course of action. We have to consider all the implications. On one hand, the Adak base is a complete town with housing for 6,000 people, schools, a hospital, shops, and a bowling alley. It's an ideal site for reuse in many ways. But without cleanup, the human risk is enormous. Unfortunately, the price tag for remediation is enormous as well.

We're really between a rock and a hard place. It's up to the decision-makers—the Navy, EPA, and the state—to determine whether they want to clear the island of UXO, allow reuse without clearance, or refuse to transfer the island. If transfer occurs, it will require a long-term commitment by the Aleut Corporation to enforce restriction of access to UXO areas.

Q: What exactly is EPA's role in the closure of these bases?

A: It can vary from site to site, but mainly EPA provides recommendations for cleanup, develops risk assessments regarding contaminants and other environmental factors, and evaluates cleanup activities. Because Adak is an NPL site, EPA must ensure that the decisions made satisfy the primary criteria



of CERCLA. Additionally, EPA approves the transfer of all property contingent upon completion of remedial action. If all goes well, as is frequently the case, our role can be very limited. Basically, we're there to facilitate, moderate, advise, and assist in document review.

Q: How do you feel your work will impact future base closings?

A: Determining how to handle the reuse of Adak could have national implications. Though this is the first time we've really addressed a potential transfer at a base with UXO, we'll definitely be seeing this situation more often. Almost every military facility has developed, tested, or stored some sort of ordnance and munitions. Determining acceptable risks for reuse and the most cost-effective solutions is not an easy process. There are no precedents. That's exciting, but very challenging. Everyone on the RAB has an opinion of how this situation should be handled.

Q: How is the government getting involved in UXO cleanup?

A: DoD requested that the Defense Science Board study UXO remediation and other cleanup and disposal processes in which ordnance of any sort is concerned. In addition, the Range Rule, a DoD measure currently in development, proposes a new investigation, evaluation, and procedure for clearing UXO that will help in future cases, but does not aid in determining Adak's future. On a more regional level, I briefed Senator Ted Stevens's staff in June on issues facing Adak. He wants to find a satisfactory solution for Adak and has supported higher appropriations for the Navy's cleanup efforts.

Q: What other cleanup activities are taking place at Adak?

A: The rest of the cleanup process is going very well. The Navy has been very proactive in addressing heavily contaminated sites within the base. It has capped all the landfills and completed numerous cleanups of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The Navy also is working to contain asbestos in many buildings. The state of Alaska has been instrumental in cleaning up various types of fuel spills, which comprise a good 80 percent of Adak's pollution problems.

Q: What do you see for Adak's future?

A: I really can't say at this point. There are still many issues to discuss and consider. Everything has gone really well in terms of cooperation and commitment. Ultimately, I believe we will do what's best for the environment and all concerned.

To learn more about Adak, visit these Web sites:

www.adakisland.com

www.fas.org/irp/overhead/nsg_adak.htm

[www.navy.mil/homepages/navfac_es/maps/](http://www.navy.mil/homepages/navfac_es/maps/ADAK/adaknp.htm)

ADAK/adaknp.htm



Celebrating Success

Celebrating Success



One of FFRRO's primary responsibilities, in cooperation with its regional offices, is to help DoD achieve the goals of President Clinton's Fast-Track Cleanup Program. The program accelerates the cleanup of closed military bases and speeds the economic recovery of communities affected by those closings. This column showcases cleanup and reuse accomplishments.

Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Michigan

Wurtsmith Air Force Base, located on more than 5,000 acres in northeast Michigan, stood ready for more than 70 years to support strategic bombing operations worldwide. In this capacity, the base managed supplies of aircraft fuel, mechanical

cleansers, solvents, and paints, some of which leaked into the soil and subsequently the groundwater. Contaminants found included trichloroethylene; 1,1-dichloro-ethane; 1,1,1-trichloroethane; vinyl chloride; benzene; toluene; ethylbenzene; and xylene.

The decision to close the base was made in 1993. A BCT, consisting of representatives of EPA, the Air Force, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality was then formed to clean up the site. In an effort to expedite cleanup and minimize cost, an innovative technology, *in situ* enhanced bioremediation, was implemented to treat the contaminated groundwater. Using this innovative technology, the BCT shaved more than \$500,000 and four years off the original cleanup estimate of \$1.5 million and 10 years.

To enhance economic redevelopment, the BCT focused its attention on reuse options for the base. Working with the Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency, the BCT enabled approximately 150 low-income families to move into base structures, which replaced substandard housing in six counties. The BCT earned national recognition for this unique reuse plan.

Additional reuse options for the base were determined and implemented. A portion of the base property was leased to companies that brought more than 1,000 jobs to the area, helping to boost the community's economy. Another reuse accomplishment that saved both time and money was the transfer of airport runways for immediate public use to the Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport Authority.

Thanks to these partnerships and the combined effort to protect human health and the environment, the Wurtsmith facility continues to be a source of pride and benefit to the community it serves.

If you would like Partners In Progress to report on a success you have observed or participated in, please call Debby Leblang at 202 260-8302 or e-mail her at <leblang.deborah@epa.gov>.

Cyber News



www.epa.gov/swerffrr

Looking for a point of contact at FFRRO? Check out FFRRO's home page which features a calendar of upcoming events, along with an impressive collection of online documents covering base closure, innovative technologies, and laws and

regulations. The home page currently showcases BRAC success stories at installations across the country, spotlighting achievements in community involvement and innovative technology applications.

www.denix.osd.mil

The DENIX (Defense Environmental Network & Information eXchange) site provides up-to-date information regarding environmental compliance, restoration, and cleanup. The site is divided into four sections: DoD, State, International, and Public. All publicly-available information can be obtained from the Public menu. Access is restricted on the other sites, but a password can be obtained after meeting certain registration requirements.

If you would like Partners in Progress to highlight your organization's home page, please e-mail Debby Leblang at <leblang.deborah@epa.gov>.

will be cleaned up. To ensure that groups affected by the transaction are fully informed, the agency applying for early transfer must submit copies of its request to the RAB; SSAB; surrounding community; and affected local, tribal, or state government. The agency also must:

- Publicize plans for the property transfer in the local newspaper of the site's neighboring community and allow for public comment.
- Ensure the transfer will not delay any mandatory cleanup actions.
- Provide a contact name and number in case any additional information is needed.

EPA reviews the covenant deferral request, as well as input from the affected groups, to determine if the property qualifies for early transfer under the new guidance. If it does, EPA works with the current and future owners to draft a transfer agreement, which includes the following:

- Information on the type and quantity of hazardous substances on the site.
- A description of the cleanup that has occurred.
- A clause that states the federal government's right to inspect the property after the transfer.
- Assurances that the necessary cleanup actions have been, are, or will be completed.

If the new owner is planning to pay for the cleanup itself, the agency that is transferring the property must provide EPA with specific information about the new owner's technical and financial capacity to complete the cleanup. Ultimately, however, the agency transferring the property is still responsible for assuring that cleanup is completed.

A Guidance for the Future

Although the Early Transfer Guidance is an EPA policy, it was developed in partnership with DoD, DOE, and the U.S. General Services Administration. While early transfers cannot be applied when property will stay within the federal government, they can be implemented if the property will be used for public benefit.

Already, we are starting to see positive results of how this policy can accelerate the cleanup and restoration of sites, while safeguarding human health and the environment. In future issues, we will share specific examples of how the Early Transfer Guidance is easing reuse and redevelopment plans at federal facilities.

The Early Transfer Guidance and many other policies regarding the restoration and reuse of federal facilities can be found on FFRRO's home page at <www.epa.gov/swerffrr/doc/hkcover.htm>.

Join Our Mailing List

If you would like to be on the FFRRO mailing list to receive future issues of *Partners In Progress*, please fill out and return this form to ERG, c/o Leo Pineda, 2200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22201-3324 or fax to 703 841-1440. Alternately, you can send your request via e-mail to <lpineda@erg.com>.

Write To Us

We encourage your questions, comments, and contributions. Please send your comments to Debby Leblang by mail at EPA/FFRRO, mailcode: 5101, 401 M Street, SW., Washington, DC 20460; e-mail at <leblang.deborah@epa.gov>; or by fax at 202 260-5646.



Name: _____

Agency/Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Finding Solutions

EPA and the Air Force are breaking bread and breaking down barriers to base cleanups during monthly “Brown Bag” meetings. The meetings provide an open forum for sharing success stories and lessons learned, networking, and partnering. This forum helps decision-makers find solutions to ongoing issues faster, sometimes within 24 hours, according to Dr. Naim Qazi of the Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA). Division chiefs from both agencies usually attend these meetings.

Topics focus on minimizing environmental impacts and improving efficiency during base cleanups. The topics are selected in advance and provided to all attendees. Recent meetings have been devoted to discussing time- and cost-saving initiatives for remediation. The AFBCA proposes looking at various cleanup efforts to determine which remedies have been most effective.

Meetings are held in the AFBCA building, 1700 North Moore Street, Suite 2300, Arlington, VA. For more information and future topics for discussion, contact Dr. Naim Qazi (AFBCA) at 703 696-5580 or Lisa Tyhsen (EPA) at 202 260-9926.



For more information

Do you have questions about federal facility cleanup and reuse? Do you want to learn more about FFRRO's partnerships and latest projects? If so, call FFRRO at 202 260-9924. Also, look for information on the Internet at <www.epa.gov/swerffrr>. You'll find information on innovative cleanup technologies, current guidance, links to Web sites of FFRRO partners, and more.



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